

Folded Wings

LOUISE HUBBARD HUDSON

Louise Hubbard Knollan

For my Pal





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Folded Wings

by

LOUISE HUBBARD HUDSON

THE McCLURE PRINTING COMPANY

STAUNTON

VIRGINIA

Folded Wings

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THE MELLUM PRINTING COMPANY
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Dedicated To My Husband

WM. E. HUDSON

and

OUR MASSANETTA FAMILY

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FOREWORD

These poems by Mrs. Hudson were born in the deep soil of a pure heart. They are the spontaneous outburst of an unselfish mind thinking in terms of others. One reason for the publication of this little book is that friends, comforted by these poems, have suggested that they be made available to the public.

As in the lives of all people, shadows have fallen over her pathway. Death has broken family ties as strong as steel. Material losses have been bravely borne. I have been deeply touched by a number of these poems, especially the one entitled, "What Has Sorrow Done For Me."

The note of joy is likewise sounded in these poems. Like the ploughman-poet, Robert Burns, she loves "the mouse and the daisy and all the things great and small that God has made."

She shares the thought of Lloyd Douglas in his beautiful book, "The Robe," that when a deed is advertised it lessens its virtue. However, I think the readers of these poems would be interested to know that a few of them have been printed in "The New York Times" and a number of magazines. The following are quotations from letters which I have literally stolen from her files:

"Uplifted me spiritually and said something to me I had need of hearing."

"Your soul is deep-rooted in the eternal things."

"God has been good to inspire you with such lovely thoughts and the capability of putting them into poetry."

"I cannot tell you when anything has touched me so much as your beautiful poem which you sent me recently," wrote Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, pastor of the Marble Collegiate Church, New York City.

Recently Dr. Dunbar H. Ogden, New Orleans, preached from the text, "Blessed are the peacemakers," closing his sermon with her poem entitled, "Influence." Many expressions of appreciation have come which are too personal and sacred to record.

Mrs. Hudson is a daughter of the late William P. Hubbard, a constitutional lawyer of Wheeling, West Virginia. Both he and his father were members of the United States Congress. Her mother, Mrs. Anna Elizabeth Chamberlin Hubbard, was a Southerner, known for her deep piety and victorious living.

WM. E. HUDSON

Staunton, Virginia,
1947.

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FOLDED WINGS

Oh God, light every candle of my soul
That I may voice
The grief, the love and longing of the world:
Release the folded wings
Of cold constraint
Until the words, that lie so pale and still
Upon the altar of my throbbing heart,
Arise as incense,
Quickened into flame
By Thy transforming spirit.

LIKE A PRAYER

A tiny seed breaks through the sod,
Yearning to feel the breath of God;

A bud, quivering to express
A blossom's hidden loveliness.

How warm the sun's compelling light . . .
And then: the frost's keen-killing blight!

But perfume lingers in the air,
Ascending Godward like a prayer;

Although the fragrance is forespent,
My heart enshrines the sacrament.

MY INHERITANCE

"This is my Father's world," I know,
Yet it belongs to me;
The triumph of a cardinal's note,
The leafing of each tree.

The glory of the starlit sky,
The rainbow's pot of gold,
A breath of new life from the sea,
The strength the mountains hold.

This is my Father's world, I know,
Made by his own decree:
O that is why I am so sure
That it belongs to me.

SUNSET HOUR

I think the world is loveliest
At sunset hour, when darkening hills
Loom high against the glowing west;
And low thrush-music gently fills
The pathless forest, as she sings
Her lullaby to nesting birds;
When goodnight prayers of helpless things
Are lifted Godward without words.

FAITHFUL TILLER OF THE FIELD

Faithful tiller of the field,
Partner of the rising sun,
Are you weary of your task
At early dawn begun?

Do you ever face the sky
Listening to a cardinal's call?
Can you scent the crimson rose
Before soft petals fall?

Do you envisage harvests
When the plow upturns the sod,
and cool, awakening, breezes
Bring whisperings from God?

If loveliness enthrall you
She will recompense all loss,
And hovering near the furrows,
Shoulder drudgery's cross

NANTUCKET IN OCTOBER

If God loves beauty, little Island,
Swept by white spray,
He must love you in late October—
Love you today.

He tints the moors in gold and crimson,
With His sure hand,
And whispers to lone sea gulls secrets
They understand.
Ocean meets sky in blueness. One sail
Drifts out between;—
I think God and I watch silently
His work supreme.

IN NOVEMBER

The morning summer said good-by,
Unloved November came;
That day I saw the wild geese fly,
And heard them call my name.

I longed for wings that I might follow;—
Forgetting naked trees;
Forgetting the long, lonely hollow
Filled with dead, sodden leaves.

Yet thoughts can soar like wild geese wings,
Even in November;
And violets are lovely things
For a heart to remember.

BY AND BY

Good-by violets and sweet-scented clover,
O promise to blossom next year!
When wintry snow-mantled days have ended,
We shall be waiting here.

We shall be waiting for vibrant bird notes;
Waiting, listening for vesper song;
Waiting for violets and sweet-scented clover—
The time will not be long.

There will be fairyland frosted on windows;
White peaks against a sunset sky;
Fallen embers dying on the hearthstone. . . .
And April. . . by and by.

FOOTFALLS AT CHRISTMAS

Wreaths of holly at the windows;
Christmas carols in the air;
But my heart is restless-listening
For your footfalls on the stair.

Did you know before God called you,
Had I ever told you, dear,
How I waited for those footfalls
What it meant to have you near?..

Tonight, perhaps, when all is still,
And I lift my soul in prayer,
God will let me hear the echo
Of those footfalls—over There

TO THE NEW YEAR

Farewell, Old Year!
Close up the book that you have written,
With pages torn and marred;
Our hearts are heavy with foreboding,
With sorrow overborne;
And yet—
A volume lies beside you
Whose golden clasp is radiant
In the sun,
God grant that each white page
As it be opened
May gallantly record
Man's deeds of honor and of love
When the new-born year
Is done.

(Suggested by a sermon preached by the Reverend
Dunbar H. Ogden, D.D.)

INFLUENCE

Shadows rest upon us
From pilgrims passing by;
Some breathe a benediction,
While others crucify.

Some are bleak and somber
And bear a taint of sin,
Others are as chaste as truth
With sunlight streaming in.

Each soul will cast a shadow,
Upon the pilgrim way,
To touch life with its healing,
Or bring death's swift decay.

FOR GOD

That was a little thing to do,
Yet done from depth of love for You:
Much smaller than the widow's might,
But, oh, it set my soul alight!

WHY I BELIEVE IN GOD

I see Him in the star-filled night,
The rainbow's arc and eagle's flight,
An autumn leaf that flutters by,
Purple mountains that pierce the sky.

I feel Him in a mother's love
Deeply enfolded from above,
The dearness of a little child,
My heart, when it is reconciled.

I walk with Him near beds of pain;
Along a lilac-scented lane;
Through darkened streets and teeming throng
That seeks for light and yearns for song.

I hear Him in the thrush's call,
In music of the waterfall,
Deep organ notes, ascending prayer . . .
In Jesus' footprints—everywhere.

LEST WE FORGET

We may forget earth's great ones,
When heroes lived and died,
The names of changing countries,
And much beside.

We may forget the beauty
Of crimson leaves that fall,
The white spray of the ocean,
We may forget it all.

But, oh . . if we forget a cross
Upon Golgotha's hill!
Forget the bleeding of a HEART,
Our pardon still.

MY THANKS

For air I breathe which comes from Thee,
For mystic dawn and sparkling sea,
I render thanks.

For midday sun that reaches low
Its blessed bounty to bestow,
I give Thee thanks.

For gathering clouds, and midnight dark,
When no star shines to guide my bark,
I yield my thanks

For hope Thy spirit breathed in me,
And hidden glories I shall see,
Accept my thanks.

ADOPTED

The day I knelt beside you,
And looked into you eyes,
A glory over-arched my world
Revealing Paradise.

Little baby, gift of God,
Many days have passed
Since He laid you in my arms—
They have rushed so fast.

Ever since that birth of love,
The light that shone that day,
Something sings within my heart—
"Adopted," do they say?

EMPTY ARMS

A lonely woman's baby died today,
Yet you, my darling, lie within my arms,
So sweet, and warm, and safe. I know no more
Than you, my little one, why her tired arms
Are limp with emptiness, and mine are filled.
Her baby was the only thing on earth
She had to love and I have much, so much
I do not know, I cannot understand
The why;—but I can hear that sobbing heart,
And I can feel the answer in my own:
More costly far than tears.

THE DARKNESS

When one is sad, the darkness is so kind—
It comes unheralded on brooding wings;
Releasing tears the daylight hours confined,
And eases the pain that memory brings.

O welcome darkness, sooth the world tonight,
Silence the clamor of the strife-filled day,
Rebuke the harshness of the hours of light,
And take all fear, all bitterness away.

LULLABY

Goodnight, little baby,
The sun is in bed,
Moonbeams are watching
The world in his stead;
Soft clouds are unveiling
The hidden starlight,
And voices are whispering,
"Goodnight, dear, goodnight."

Goodnight, little baby,
With eyes of deep blue,
God's own gentle angels
Are mothering you;
Far, far, from the tumult
Of life's busy rush,
Enfolded in stillness,
Hush, darling, h-u-s-h!

CHILDHOOD WISDOM

The children know what grown folks want
On every lonely night;
They want to find their old rag doll,
And hug her very tight.

Somehow they keep remembering
Their mother's warm embrace
Until they almost, almost see
The beauty of her face.

TO MY SCRUBBY DOG

You are only a scrubby dog, I know,
You cannot reason, or with wit compete,
Nor even men's high-sounding words repeat;
You have no soul to make you skyward grow.
(I often wonder how this happened so;
For when I suffer from some sore defeat,
You stretch yourself beside my restless feet,
And sense the very way my heart-winds blow.)
Oh, as you watch me with those steadfast eyes,
My loyal friend, you mean so much to me.
You have rare beauty no one else can see
That fits you for a dog's green Paradise. . .
I dread the night when I shall turn the key,
And you will not be there to welcome me.

A PLEA TO DUTY

O Duty, change your cowl of grey
To one of myrtle green,
Or lovely shade of amethyst
That might adorn a queen.

Your somber garb makes scant appeal
To pleasure-loving eyes,
Yet if one wears it every day
His life will crystalize.

TARNISHED SYMBOLS

I told you many times how you should live,
That you must meet life's test triumphantly;
Must bear with steadfast heart each heavy cross. .
Then sorrow came with crucifying steel,
And I forgot the lesson I had taught.
I mocked my oft repeated admonitions
By shedding tears of agonized defeat. .
You turned, in shattered faith, and handed me
The tarnished symbols I had given you.

SING, SAD HEART

A bird is calling. . Answer heart.
O crucify your pain!
Recapture life's lost ecstasy
And lift your song again.

Some one is waiting for your song—
For night to disappear:
Sing through the darkness, sing, sad heart—
The dawn, the dawn is near.

WITHOUT CLERICAL DEGREE

All hail, blithe little bird,
Returning bravely to relay
The wrecked foundation of your home,
Windswept on yesterday.

Triumphant in your zeal,
You place each newly-salvaged twig,
As if a voice within you said,
"Build strong, this time, and big.' "

Who taught you how to preach,
Without a clerical degree?
In feathered vestments, to enact
Great sermons from a tree.

SIREN OF THE YEAR

O April, siren of the warm-torn year,
Breathe gently on the hearts no longer
young.

Why should life be so winterbound by
fear

When cowslips blossom and bluebirds
have sung?

CAMOUFLAGED VICTORY

We talk of victory on seven seas
Of keeping peace by militant control,
Can nations win a white-winged peace
from these,
If man has lost the mastery of his soul?

CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Men of that brave batallion, silent now,
Can you look down from your eternal height
And see the little children's upturned eyes,
The youths who caught the banner you let fall,
The aged ones who are remembering you?
Oh, winged birdmen, of the star-filled sky,
Oh, soldiers, sailors,, cloud of witnesses,
Tomorrow, will you see mankind at last
Made ready, by your deathless legacy,
To resurrect the freedom of the world?

HOLY WOOD

I found a bit of holy wood,
Amid the charred debris
Of England's proud cathedral,
At war-swept Coventry.

A Polish carver shaped the wood
Into a Christmas star,
That was to be my humble gift
For one who lived afar.

"Might I carve a symbol," he asked,
"Something to make it shine;
Sculpture within its very heart
My favorite design?"

"Fulfill your own desire, my lad,
Your hand is wholly free"
He carved in love a smoke-stained cross,
But radiant to me.

EVENING STAR

Youth looks upon the dawning day
With laughter and a song;
He views a lovely, sunlit road,
Where only flowers belong.

At noon the fitful sky grows dark;
Fierce storms his way accost;
He often wanders from his path,
With vision all but lost.

Yet when the dusk enfolds the light,
His eyes can see afar
The glory of the afterglow,
And then, the Evening star.

MOUNTAIN TRAILS

Trails are forever calling
Around a hidden bend,
Beckoning me to follow
To some far journey's end.

Up, and up, they venture
To peaks where eagles fly,
And my exalted spirit
Reaches for the sky.

(Refers to a picture hanging in the hotel lobby at Massanetta Springs, Virginia, painted by Miss Ethel Brown when her eyesight began to fail.)

HER LAST PICTURE

(To E. L. B.)

She painted a rugged mountain,
Misty against the sky,
With tiny, windswept cabins,
And white clouds drifting by.

In that hour of deepening stillness
A fear akin to pain
Blended her heart with the beauty
She had reproduced again. . . .

If she paints no other landscape,
Her sky be ever dark,
On that scene of silvery silence
Her soul has left its mark.

Massanetta
when her

PETITION

Our Father, pity him who must today
Surrender into those more skillful hands
The task he yearns so ardently to keep,
But knows he can no longer well perform.
How sharp the pain to lose one's zealous grip

Upon the task unfinished, yet so loved,
And lay it, wholly without bitterness,
Into another's eager, outstretched hands;
While all the passion of a hungry heart
So longs to hold and keep the work its own.
Oh, take the aching from this burdened heart
And find some work for bruised hands, I pray

(Written after reading, "The Art of Living" by the Reverend
Norman Vincent Peale, D.D.)

SURRENDER

Lord, touch my soul and give it wings;
Lift me above life's sordid things:
Worry and fear and futile care—
I would find beauty everywhere.

Kindle my heart with quickening flame,
Burn out the dross, the gold reclaim;
Forgive my selfishness and sin.
Oh, Christ, my Saviour, enter in.

Take from these trembling hands my will,
While I am waiting, longing—still;
Love me, and make me wholly Thine . .
This day, I would my all resign.

Reverend

LIFT YOUR EYES

Oh, lift your eyes to rugged mountains,
Veiled in purple majesty,
You, who are groping for lost courage,
May never find it by the sea.

The windswept waves are restless, troubled,
Forever seeking their release:
But mountains are serene and steadfast,
Symbolic of abiding peace.

The foaming ocean fights for harbor,
Wave battles wave in hard-won race:
While mountains rise in lofty splendor,
Remote from rivalry, or haste.

Oh, lift your eyes to rugged mountains,
You, who have scanned the cold, grey sea.
A light will break above the hilltops,
Beckoning from Eternity.

SOLDIER'S LEGACY

The day death's haunting summons came
his soul
Bequeathed its richest legacy to mine;
The flaming torch of courage he held high,
Bearing a pattern of his own design.
I tried to keep it shining through the night
That followed; watched it waver and grow dim—
Yet, groping through life's storm-swept
battlefield,
I kept alight my legacy from him.

TO MY FATHER

My mind relives, today, those twilight hours
Of years now gone. We walked together then,
My sister, you and I, along the path
That wandered through the open gate of our
Beloved home. Gay laughter filled your eyes,
As you repeated bits of rustic verse
Supposedly within a volume you
Pretended to be writing. Tragic lines
From a novel followed portraying you
As the patient hero, misunderstood,
And cruelly abused by thankless children
(My sister and myself, close by your side) . .
We walked together, on and on, until
The darkness mantled fragrant evergreens,
And those dear evening hours passed into night.

The books of which you claimed to be the author
Were printed, one by one, upon our hearts.
The copyright is yours forevermore . . .
I thank you for remembered comradeship,
And every sacrifice of fatherhood.

MY MOTHER'S CANDLES

Deep in my heart there is a templed shrine,
The vaulted arches and the nave are mine;
But when I kneel beside the shrine for prayer,
I find her lighted candles there.

So tall those candles, and so gold the fire
That mounts in fragrance, Godward, higher, higher;
Her love enshrined those candles years ago;
O may they never cease to glow.

OVERSHADOWED

O what is half so lovely
As moonlight on the sea,
Unless it be a sunlit halo
Upon a white birch tree.

Yet something far more lovely
Than these could ever be,
The constant radiance of your soul
Overshadowing me.

WHAT HAS SORROW DONE TO ME?

What has sorrow done to me?
Has it knit me close to Thee?
When those quick thrusts knifed my heart,
Left it bleeding—cleft apart,
What took place within my soul,
Was it kept in Thy control?

Great God, wounds that come from Thee
Beautify Eternity

FOR ONE HOUR

If God would lend you
To me for one hour,
How would we spend
Those blessed moments, dear?

I'd hold you close
And look into your eyes
And find the same old
Lovelight shining clear.

Would you then feel
The throbbing of my heart,
And sense its deep-felt hunger
Since you left? . . .
As you have always read
The secrets there
I would erase the words,
"Bereft, bereft."

CONVOYED

Her spirit was a white-winged ship,
Majestic, unafraid;
Convoyed upon her chartered course
As by celestial aid.

My little boat is following
Through swiftly-greying light,
Windswept, but ever keeping her
Victory ship in sight.

MEMORIES

I gathered lovely memories,
When God called you away;
Laid them in fragrant lavender,
Where they will ever stay.

I count, recount my treasures,
Hoarded through the years,
Touch them with love's own tenderness,
And hallow them with tears.

Death is so kind to leave with us
Eternal memories—
Those timeless joys made doubly dear
By our Gethsemanes.

RECOMPENCE

These are the things for which I am yearning:
Footsteps returning
Like tides of the sea;
Dry applewood on a hearth stone burning;
Love's tender circle safe-folding me.

Long silent voices I would be hearing;
Dear ones appearing to gladden me;
With separation beyond all fearing;—
I long for things as they used to be.

Those golden days for which I am yearning
Are not returning
Like tides of the sea;
Yet every new dawn I am discerning,
Beauty those days have thrown around me.

OUT OF ASHES

When the last petal has fallen
The midnight chorus sung;
When man has lost the treasures
To which his heart has clung:
When on his life's cold hearthstone
Grey ashes show no spark,
May he somehow find the God-hand
And clasp it in the dark.

EMBERS

I wandered through a long-used gate,
Close to a giant pine,
Safe-guarding like a sentinal
The childhood home of mine

Magnolia trees no longer bloomed,
Robins had ceased to sing;
Yet nowhere did I find a sign
That warned of trespassing.

I climbed the weather-beaten steps;
Peered through half-shuttered glass
At dusty shelves of faded books,
Cold hearth and tarnished brass. .

The blackened embers seemed to glow
Upon that cold hearthstone,
As if a soul abiding there
Commingled with my own.

With sudden rush of memory,
The past leaped into flame—
The spirit of my childhood home
Still lived and breathed my name.

GOOD-BY, OLD DAYS

Good-by, old days, with hours forever ended
No moments left for recompense, for tears:
Behind: time's grave, fast-sealed and un-
attended,
Before: life's rainbow beckoning through the
years.

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